

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

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POST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN STB DOCKET NO. AB- 570 (Sub No. 2X)

March 4, 2008

ABANDONMENT TYPE

The time for comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) has expired in this:

() Notice of Exemption (X) Petition for Exemption () Regulated Abandonment

() NO NEW COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

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SEA served an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proceeding on June 29, 2007, for public review and comment. In the EA, SEA recommended three environmental conditions and concluded that the proposed action would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

Summary

By decision served on August 17, 2007, the Board granted a petition for exemption for the Palouse River & Coulee City Railroad, Inc. (PRCC) to abandon a 0.20 mile portion of rail line in Latah County, Idaho, subject to certain conditions. In its decision, the Board imposed the following three environmental conditions: 1) PRCC shall consult with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to ensure that DEQ's concerns regarding PRCC's existing right-of-way and salvage activities are addressed. Furthermore, PRCC shall submit the results of these consultations in writing to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis prior to the onset of salvage operations.; 2) PRCC shall notify the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) at least 90 days prior to beginning salvage activities in order to plan for the possible relocation of the geodetic station markers by NGS; and 3) a Section 106 condition that required the PRCC to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of its rail right-of-way (with the exception of the bridge owned by Gritman Medical Center) until the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470f, has been completed

By a letter dated January 28, 2008, Mr. Kerby Cole, Regional Administrator, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, states that the additional information provided by PRCC in a submission dated January 25, 2008, addresses their agency's concerns.

In an e-mail dated October 10, 2007, from PRCC to Mr. Simon Monroe, National Geodetic Survey (NGS), PRCC states that the two geodetic survey markers identified by the NGS will not be disturbed by salvage or abandonment activities.

Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's (Council) regulations for implementing the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) reviewed the proposed abandonment and

determined that the rail line, with the exception of the privately owned referenced bridge, may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Furthermore, SEA concurred with the SHPO's finding in a letter dated December 1, 2006, where it stated that the rail line itself may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

By a letter dated November 16, 2007, the SHPO states that, with the submission of additional information by PRCC, it no longer believes that the bridge or the rail line are historically significant. Therefore, the SHPO concludes that abandonment would have no effect on the National Register listing eligibility of the rail line and that the Board has concluded its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800.5(b), and following consultation with the SHPO and the public, we have determined that the proposed abandonment would not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

Accordingly, we recommend that the Section 106 condition be removed. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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Copies furnished to SEA Chron and ECT